



**BENZIE BUS**  
CONNECTING PEOPLE TO COMMUNITY

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

# SUCCESSFUL ADAPTABILITY



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

A record number of voters supported (80% voted yes) the 5-year millage renewal on March 10th and soon after COVID-19 pandemic procedure took full hold in Michigan and the country. Benzie Bus (BTA) promptly secured sanitizing supplies which sold out shortly after to those reacting slower. Bus services were curtailed for “non-essential” rides and some Staff elected to be furloughed.

## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Services were altered to help people from across the community quarantined at their homes. BTA employees have provided:

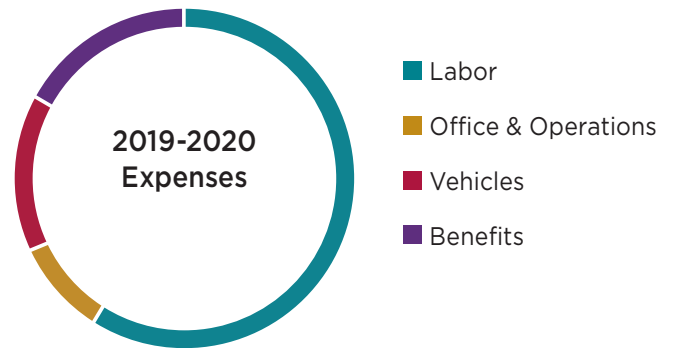
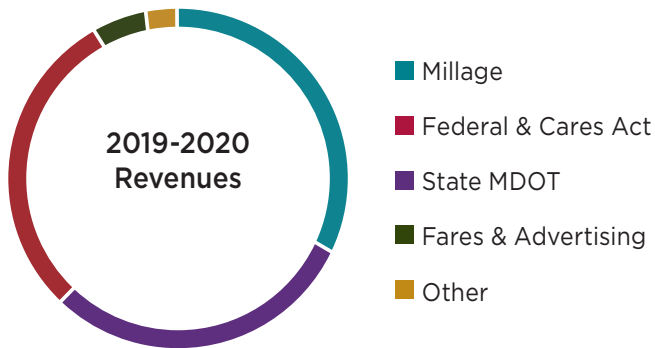
- 570 grocery shopping orders with deliveries
- 260 pharmacy pickups
- 409 food pantry care packages



## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

With the vision of Grow Benzie and others, 2,300 handsewn cloth masks were made locally and delivered to medical facilities, businesses, and whoever requested them—Wow!

Benzie Bus connects people of all ages and abilities to our community and promotes independence and prosperity through a safe and convenient public transit system.



### AGILITY & CHANGE MANAGEMENT

All transits received the Federal Gov't CARES Act Funding in the amount of an additional 18% reimbursement for all expenses for fiscal year 2019/2020. This money allowed BTA to eliminate fare collection for 6 months (safer for drivers/passengers), create protective shields for buses, and run at lower capacity (ensuring safe spaces for passengers). CARES Act money was budgeted for 2020/2021 as well for BTA to be prepared for whatever may come.

### FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY (\$120,000 SAVED)

BTA furloughed employees with "high immune risk" and those who are close to someone considered "high risk" which enabled them to draw unemployment. This saved BTA over \$120,000 which can be carried forward in our reserves toward future uncertainty in public MDOT\* and Federal funding. The Millage provides about one-third of the BTA annual budget, with the remaining two-thirds coming from MDOT\*, Federal, Farebox and grant funds.

*\*Note: MDOT's budget is funded through gas taxes and the State of Michigan has lost significant tax revenue that may affect future Transportation funding*

### GRANTS GALORE (\$666,000 AWARDED)

In March, during the shutdown, BTA wrote a grant for Electric Buses and received \$535,000 for several electric buses. This year BTA replaced 4 vehicles with liquid propane (LP) propelled models and now the fleet of 22 boasts 90% LP propelled.



Also, new dispatcher software was procured through \$131,000 grant funding and riders can now use an app for viewing ride information. This technology will boost efficiency (through reduction in miles driven, fuel, passenger capacity), provide a safe/touchless experience for scheduling & payment, and a seamless experience for making changes, appealing to a tech savvy and new generation of ridership.



**BENZIE BUS**

**Benzie Transportation Authority**  
Connecting People to Community

231.325.3000 office  
231.325.3007 fax

14150 US Highway 31  
Beulah, Michigan 49617

BenzieBus.com